THE NEW
SUNDAY EXPRESS
BENGALURU • SUNDAY • NOVEMBER 24, 2024 • ₹12.00 • PAGES 24 • LATE CITY EDITION

DECIDE

- MASSIVE SLIDE IN VOTE SHARES OF UDDHAV'S SHIV SENA, CONGRESS
- JHARKHAND VICTORY CONSOLATION PRIZE FOR ANTI-BJP INDIA BLOC

BJP GETS ITS MAHA MANTRA RIGHT, CONG LOSES MORE MOJO

Prime Minister Narendra Modi at BJP HQ in New Delhi on Saturday | SHEKHAR YADAV

Hemant Soren with Kalpana Soren and sons at Ranchi airport on Saturday | PTI

At 85%, BJP's strike rate highest in state

MAHARASHTRA

SUDHIR SURYAWANSHI @ Mumbai

THE closely-fought Maharashtra assembly elections on Saturday decisively swung in favour of the BJP-led Mahayuti alliance, routing the Opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi that had gained a psychological advantage by its sterling performance in the Lok Sabha polls six months ago.

The BJP emerged the single largest party with 132 seats, surpassing its last two scores of 122 in 2014 and 105 in 2019. This is the peak BJP performance in Maharashtra with a strike rate of more than 85% — the highest among all alliance partners as well as the Opposition.

Chief Minister Eknath Shinde's Shiv Sena contested 79 seats and won 57, with a vote share of 12.38%. Shinde ensured that the MLAs who revolted along with him against Uddhav Thackeray's leadership got elected. In contrast, the Uddhav-led Sena could manage just 20 seats.

Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar-led NCP won 41 of the total 59 seats it contested with a 9.01% vote share as against Sharad Pawar's NCP-SP getting 11.28% votes but only 10 seats.

As for the Congress, it had won 13 seats in the Lok Sabha polls but squandered the advantage within six months. It managed to pick up just 16 seats in the assembly polls despite contesting from 101 (12.24% vote share). The debacle meant that for the first time in the history of the state assembly, there will be no leader of Opposition. For, no Opposition party got even 10% of total strength of the 288 of the House.

As for the BJP, after the surprise victory in the Haryana polls, the party appears to have picked up momentum. Its welfare schemes like the *Ladli Behna* struck a chord, evidenced by high polling of women. Local leaders and the RSS did the hard yards rather than big-time parachuting of national leaders to sway the electorate. In contrast, prominent Congress leaders like Rahul Gandhi were hardly visible on the ground in both Maharashtra and Jharkhand.

DIVISIVE FORCES LOST: PM

Prime Minister Narendra Modi hailed the Maharashtra mandate as a victory of development, good governance and social justice. Speaking at the party headquarters in Delhi, Modi said, "Divisive forces have been defeated." He alleged that India faces the challenge of urban Naxals of the Congress whose remote control is abroad | P7

Biggest message from Maharashtra after Haryana polls is unity. *Ek hain to safe hain* has become country's *mahamantra*

Narendra Modi, prime minister

Soren storms back to power with record win

JHARKHAND

MUKESH RANJAN @ Ranchi

DISPROVING exit polls that gave the BJP-led NDA an edge in the Jharkhand Assembly polls, Hemant Soren's JMM-led alliance on Saturday stormed back to power for the second consecutive term, winning a comfortable majority in the 81-member assembly.

Soren, riding on the immense popularity of his better half Kalpana and welfare schemes like Mukhyamantri Maiyan Samman Yojana, scored the best ever performance by any party or leader since the formation of Jharkhand.

The BJP had deployed master strategists including Union minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan and Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma and also plugged the loopholes that had led to ouster of the Raghubar Das government in 2019, but it failed to regain the trust of the people, particularly tribals, in Jharkhand.

According to political analysts, the financial assistance of ₹1,000 (which was later increased to ₹2,500) under Mukhyamantri Maiyan Samman Yojana was a big hit as it helped JMM mobilize women voters in Jharkhand.

Talking to this newspaper ahead of the Assembly polls, Kalpana had termed the programme as a revolutionary step.

"₹1,000 is a big amount for the women living in the rural areas as most of them are housewives and are mostly dependent on their husbands due to lack of livelihood opportunities for them. With the amount received in their bank accounts regularly, they felt empowered and hence voted enthusiastically in favour of INDIA bloc," said political analyst Professor V P Sharan.

According to Sharan, Kalpana's entry into active politics in the absence of her husband also helped as women voters instantly connected with her. As per ECI data, women voters outnumbered male voters by 5,51,797 across the state during the two-phase polling.

MESSAGE TO THE BJP, SAYS CONG

The Congress hailed the poll results in Jharkhand, saying the people of the state have rejected the "politics of polarisation" peddled by BJP

Will BJP do a Bihar in Maha on CM?

SUDHIR SURYAWANSHI @ Mumbai

AFTER the thumping victory of the BJP-led Mahayuti alliance in Maharashtra Assembly polls, the question now is who would be the next CM.

Would the BJP let Shiv Sena leader Eknath Shinde retain the CM's post as Mahayuti fought the polls under his leadership, or would it choose to put its own person in the chair, now that it's the largest party in the alliance?

DCM Devendra Fadnavis said there is no dispute in Mahayuti over the next CM. He claimed one of the two — Shinde or Ajit Pawar — would be chosen as the next CM. He pointed to party leader Amit Shah's statement that leaders of the three parties will together take a call. However, members of both the Sena and BJP camps are confident of their party getting the CM's post. "It will be interesting to see whether the BJP top brass will decide to do what it did in Bihar (making Nitish Kumar the CM) by choosing Shinde as the CM so as to send a message that it respects its allies even when it has the numbers, or would it put its own person in the CM's chair," a political observer said.

Muslims to attend 'Basava Purana' in Gajendragad

RAGHOTTAM KOPPAR @ Gadag

HALAKERE Annadana Samsthan Mutt's Muppin Basavalinga seer has invited Muslims to attend the month-long discourses on 'Basava Purana' and other rituals at the mutt in Gajendragad. Muslims have accepted the invitation and agreed to participate in the event in large numbers. The seer visited Jamia Masjid at Gajendragad on Friday and invited Muslims to participate in the event to be held from November 25.

He said the aim of the event is to promote peace and harmony in society. Britishers divided people in the name of caste and religion and now the mutt wants to unite them through such events. Takked Dargah Hazarat Nizamuddin Ashrafi of the masjid said, "We should take an oath to live in peace and harmony henceforth. We are all Indians, but bigots always try to divide us and we should resist their attempts unitedly."

Siddappa Bandi, Gajendragad Veerashaiva-Lingayat Sangha president, said seating arrangements have been made for 10,000 people and prasada will be distributed to all during the month-long event. Thousands of devotees from Gadag and nearby districts will participate in this unique event.

Priyanka's 4.1L victory margin betters Rahul's in Wayanad

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

CONGRESS general secretary Priyanka Vadra Gandhi made her electoral debut with a bang with a massive victory in the bypoll for the Wayanad Lok Sabha constituency in Kerala, vacated by brother Rahul Gandhi. Her margin of victory - by over 4.1 lakh votes - bettered Rahul's 3.6 lakh vote margin.

The party also won byelections to all three assembly seats in Karnataka, wresting one each from the BJP and JD(S), while retained Palakkad in Kerala.

Bypolls were also held for several assembly constituencies in over a dozen states, including UP, which witnessed polling in nine seats. The ruling BJP retaining its five constituencies and wrested two from the Samajwadi Party.

In West Bengal, the ruling Trinamool Congress won all the six assembly constituencies that witnessed by-elections, including Madarihat it wrested from the BJP.

The ruling NDA in Bihar pocketed all four seats — Belaganj, Imamganj, Tarari and Ramgarh. The NDA swept the bypolls to eight Assembly seats in the Northeast.

In Rajasthan, the BJP won five of seven seats while the Congress secured a win in Dausa. The ruling AAP in Punjab wrested Gidderbaha, Dera Baba Nanak and Chabbewal from the Congress but ended up losing the Barnala seat to the grand old party

AICC chief Mallikarjun Kharge celebrates the party's win in Wayanad, with candidate Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, in New Delhi on Saturday | PTI

5 on 7 in Rajasthan

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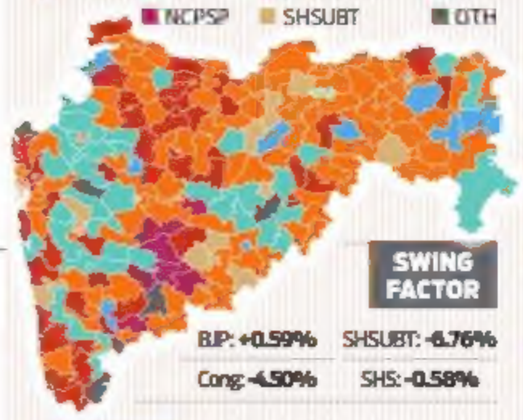
ASSEMBLY ELECTION RESULT

MAHARASHTRA

BJP | CONG | SHIV SENA | NCP | NCPSP | SHSUBT | OTH



TOTAL 288

BJP 132 (+27)
Congress 16 (-28)
Shiv Sena 57
NCP 41
SHSUBT 20
NCPSP 10
Others 12

SWING FACTOR
BJP: +0.59% | SHSUBT: -6.76%
Cong: -4.50% | SHS: -0.58%

EKNATH SHINDE won Kopri-Pachpakhadi seat by 1.2 lakh votes

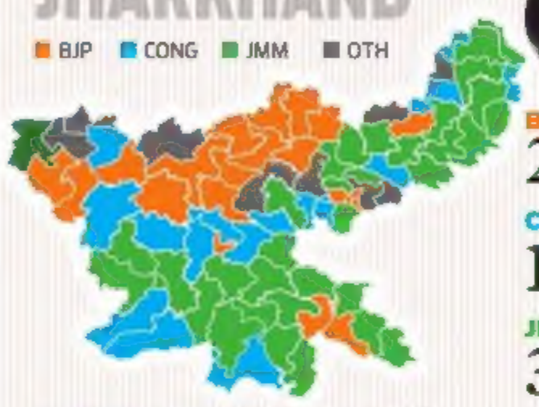
Biggest blow for Shiv Sena (UBT)

Electoral mood changed dramatically compared to the 2024 LS polls. BJP gained both vote share and seats while the Shiv Sena (UBT) suffered the most losing 6.75% vote share, followed by the Congress

**Swing Factor refers to the vote share gain/loss compared to the 2024 Lok Sabha polls*

JHARKHAND

BJP | CONG | JMM | OTH



TOTAL 81

BJP 21 (-4)
Congress 16
JMM 34 (+4)
Others 10

SWING FACTOR
BJP: -11.42%
Cong: -3.63%
JMM: 8.84%

HEMANT SOREN won the Barhait seat by 39,791 votes, defeating BJP's Gamliyel Hembrom

Spectacular gain for JMM, BJP loses hold

The Hemant Soren-led party gained nearly 9% vote share in the Assembly elections compared to the recently held Lok Sabha polls, while the BJP share slipped significantly. In all, the coalition comprising the JMM, Congress, RJD, and CPI(ML) Liberation won 56 out of the 81 seats up for grabs

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Congress gets triple booster in Karnataka

DEVARAJ B HIREHALLI @ Bengaluru

CONGRESS has emerged victorious in the Karnataka bypolls in all the three assembly constituencies of Channapatna, Sandur and Shiggaon, providing the party a big relief in the background of the debacle it suffered in Maharashtra assembly polls. The win for its candidates in Sandur, Shiggaon and Channapatna seemingly is an approval of the fact that the ruling dispensation had an edge in the bypolls.

The consolidation of AHINDA — acronym for minorities, Backward Classes and Dalits — votes seemingly favoured the Congress party candidates in all the three seats.

The results have given a shot in the arm for Chief Minister Siddaramaiah as well as the Congress government that has been mired in controversies, including the MUDA case and the alleged multi-crore Maharshi Valmiki ST Development Corporation scam, among others.

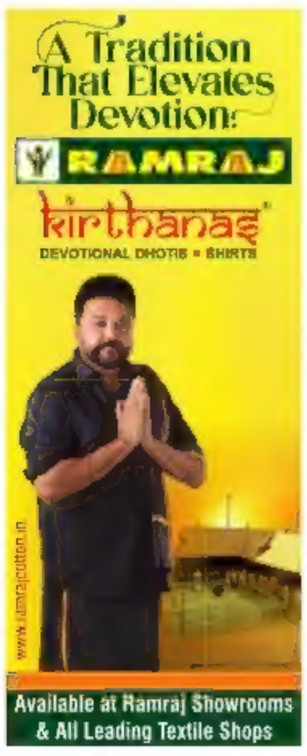
POLITICAL RADAR: BOOSTER SHOT FOR SIDDU-DKS LEADERSHIP P4

VOTE CARD

CHANNAPATNA
CP YOGESHWARA, INC — 1,12,642 VOTES
NIKHIL KUMARASWAMY, JDS — 87,229 VOTES

SANDUR
ANNAPOORNA, INC — 93,616 VOTES
BANGARU HANUMANTHA, BJP — 83,967 VOTES

SHIGGAON
PATHAN YASIR AHMED KHAN, INC — 1,00,756 VOTES
BHARAT BOMMAI, BJP — 87,308 VOTES



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